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# AMERICAN IDEALS AND RACE MIXTURE

BY PERCY STICKNEY GRANT

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THE most impressive sight to be seen in America is the stream of immigrants coming off ship at Ellis Island. No waterfall or mountain holds such awesome mystery; no river or harbor, embracing the navies of the world, expresses such power; no city so puts wings to the imagination; no work of art calls with such epic beauty. But there are spectators who behold in the procession from overseas an invading army comparable to the Gothic hordes that overran Rome, who lament this meeting of Europe and America as the first act in our National Tragedy.

Undoubtedly we have a situation unknown to any other nation, past or present. In 1910 the total population of the United States was 91,972,266; of these 13,343,583 were foreign-born whites; 10,239,579 were negroes, Indians, and Asiatics. Between 1900-1910, 9,555,673 immigrants came in from over fifty races. Of the native whites forty-seven per cent. are the children of foreign-born parents. Of our entire population 43,972,185 were born of native white parents—that is, only forty per cent.

A recent writer in *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*, Prescott F. Hall, secretary of the League for Limiting Immigration and author of a volume on immigration, stated in the January number the case against the future of American ideals under the influence of race mixture. He began by quoting Gobineau: "America is likely to be not the cradle of a new, but the grave of an old race." Mr. Hall sought to sustain this prophecy.

I belong to no immigration league, "limiting" or "liberal"; I have had no admixture of blood in my own family, outside the original area of Massachusetts, for two hundred

years, but I wish to suggest considerations that may calm the fears of Mr. Hall and his friends. In the half-dozen years since his larger study of the question a new collection of facts in the case has been made in America. A volume, *The Problem of Immigration*, just published by Professor Jenks and Professor Lauck, ought to modify considerably a pessimistic forecast. Both the authors were from the beginning connected with the United States Immigration Commission which has been studying the problem for the last four years, and they have summed up in their 484 pages the information collected in forty-two volumes of the original material published by the Commission.

Broadly speaking, our apprehension of harm to American ideals from race mixture is nothing but prejudice. Much of our dread of a deterioration of the American stock by immigration is a survival of ancient jealousy and alarm which once characterized the contact of all "natives" everywhere with all "foreigners." The sight of a foreigner meant ordinarily a raid or a war. This real dread, as it was of old, lingers in our subconsciousness. The destruction of the trait will yield only to intelligence, sympathy, and civilization.

Another element in our fear is the fetish of Teutonic superiority and the dogma of Latin degeneracy. Races that have produced in our lifetime a Cavour, a Mazzini, a Louis Pasteur, that have fought and defeated ecclesiastic and feudal enemies in their own households, have much to teach us.

In the Conference on Immigration held in New York a few years ago, there were delegates scarcely able to speak the English language who orated against later arrivals in this country than themselves and predicted our downfall if they were admitted. In short, every race considers itself superior; its diatribes against other races are sheer vanity. We Americans, in conceit of superiority, are in the same class as the Chinese. William Elliot Griffis, a writer on Asiatic people, recently declared that

"after an adult lifetime of study of the peoples of the Far East, I find few or no novelties in their history or evolution as compared with that of our own rise from savagery to civilization; nor is their human nature by a hair's-breadth different from our own. What we need now to have cast in the world's melting-pot is the colossal conceit common to the white and the yellow man with more scientific comparative history."

At any rate, our free government is a standing invitation to the oppressed of other countries, and our undeveloped wealth makes a constant appeal for strong arms and hard workers. What can we do, then? We cannot shut out "foreigners" and still be true either to our own ideals or to our practical requirements. Nor can we pick and choose. There is no accepted standard of excellence except health and "literacy." Moreover, there are not enough of one foreign stock, were we to select one as the best, to do the work in the United States waiting to be done.

Why shouldn't the badly-off foreigner come here? There is no evidence that the present forms of government under which the immigrant races live at home are the best for them; many of these governments have had to meet grave popular uprisings and revolutions. We cannot say to the immigrant, "Stay where you were born, because the government there is best adapted to you." Some of our new people are even exiles—driven from their homes. Nor can we say, "Reform your government." Such a method under despotism is too uncertain for men who desire to see results.

The forms of government under which men live are not stereotyped, and, while some change slowly, others in response to the people's need change rapidly. A democracy is the most plastic form and gives freest course to evolutionary development. There is, consequently, a natural flow from rigid to plastic governments, which can only be checked by the plastic becoming set. This it cannot do without committing suicide. One of our mistakes (a most important cause, too, of our distrust of race mixture) is to suppose that our own form of government is fixed and final, only to be injured or destroyed by any change.

The scientific attitude toward heredity is to-day different from a generation ago. Darwin's theory of slowly acquired characteristics and of the transmission by heredity of acquired characteristics was attacked by August Weismann, whose germ-plasm theory of heredity seriously weakened Darwin's hypothesis. Then came the botanist, De Vries, with his theory of spasmodic progress, amounting to "spasmodic appearance of species at a given time under the influence of certain special conditions."

Francis Galton brought forward the theory of mathematical inheritance, which, modified by Pearson, amounts to this: That of all the heritage which an individual pos-

sesses one-half on the average comes from his parents, one-fourth from his grandparents, and so on. Meanwhile the studies of Gregor Mendel, Abbot of Br $\ddot{u}$ nn, neglected for thirty-five years after their publication in 1865, came to light, with a specific body of botanical experiments leading to certain general principles of heredity. The essential part of Mendel's discoveries is the principle of the segregation of characters in the fusion of the reproductive cells or gametes, with its natural corollary, the purity of the gametes. Mendel did not believe in blends, but in the unit character of heredity.

Two theories of heredity are now current:

"1. Children show a tendency to revert to a type intermediate between the types of the two parents, or in cases of changes of types to another type, dependent upon the mid-parental type. In other words, the characteristics of the parents are blended in the children.

"2. Either the father's or the mother's type, or the type of a more remote ancestor, is reproduced, and certain parental traits may be dominant over others—i. e., one particular trait, either father's or mother's, to appear with greater frequency in the children than the corresponding but different trait of the other parent."\*

An inquiry into the values of a cephalic index (that is, the ratio of the width of the head to the length) has shown clearly that the type of heredity in intermarriages in the same race is that of alternating heredity. Children do not form a blend between their parents, but revert either to one type or the other.

Mendel's law attaches so much value to "dominant" and so much danger to "recessive" units that under his theory, it would be natural to try to divide races into the old categories of sheep and goats. But even under the operation of his law a mixed race has advantages over a pure race.

"The clear lesson of Mendelian studies to human society is this: That when two parents with the same defect marry—and there is none of us without some defect—all of the progeny must have the same defect, and there is no remedy for the defect by education, but only, at the most in a few cases, by a surgical operation. The presence of a character in one parent will dominate over its absence in the other parent; . . . the advanced position masters the retarded or absent condition."

*"The mating of dissimilars favors a combination in the offspring of the strongest characteristics of both parents"*

\* *Change in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants*, by Franz Boas.

*and fits them the better for human society.'\** A strong argument for miscegenation.

Environment to-day is considered a most important factor in heredity by students outside the ranks of pure biologists. Take such a fact as this, that the intellectual classes among the Magyars, the Uralo-Altaic peoples, the Slavs or German races, furnish us with identical measurements of trunk, extremities, etc., whereas individuals of the same race differ considerably when once distinctly separated by their occupations. Another fact in the same direction is that the measurements of Austrian Jews correspond entirely with those that Gould mentioned in the case of cultivated persons in the United States. The Austrian Jews are not engaged in mercantile work, but almost exclusively are money-lenders, small shop-keepers, lawyers, and doctors.†

We all agree with Professor Ripley that

"the first impression from comparison of our original Anglo-Saxon ancestry in America with the motley crowd now pouring in upon us is not cheering. It seems a hopeless task to cope with them, to assimilate them with our present native-born population."

But listen further:

"Yet there are distinctly encouraging features about it all. These people, in the main, have excellent physical qualities, in spite of unfavorable environment and political oppression for generations. No finer physical type than the peasantry of Austro-Hungary are to be found in Europe. The Italians, with an out-of-door life and proper food, are not weaklings. Nor is even the stunted and sedentary Jew—the third greatest in our present immigrant hordes—an unfavorable vital specimen. Their careful religious regulations have produced in them a longevity even under most unfavorable conditions. Even to-day, under normal conditions, a rough process of selection is at work to bring the better types to our shores. We receive, in the main, the best, the most progressive and alert of the peasantry that the lower classes which these lands recently tapped are able to offer. This is a feature of no mean importance. Barring artificial selection by steamship companies and police, we need not complain in the main of the physique of new arrivals."

*The great problem for us in dealing with these immigrants is not that of their nature, but that of their nurture.‡*

"We Americans who have so often seen the children of underfed, stunted, scrub immigrants match the native American in brain and

\* Charles B. Davenport, "Influence of Heredity on Human Society," in *Annals of American Academy*, July 1, 1909.

† Jean Finot, in *Race Prejudice*, pp. 120, 122.

‡ William Z. Ripley, in "Race Progress and Immigration," in *Annals of American Academy*, July, 1909, pp. 130-138.

brown ought to realize how much the superior effectiveness of the matter is due to social conditions. The cause of race superiority is a physiological trait—namely, climatic adaptability.”\*

The races coming to America show power of adaptation. But as this power of adaptation must be slow, we must be patient. It was slow among the best of the early colonists. *“The adaptability of the various races coming together on our shores seems, if these indications be borne out by further study, to be much greater than had been expected.”*†

*“Not merely do the children of immigrants in many instances show greater height and weight than the same races in their mother country, but in some instances even the head form, which has always been considered one of the most stable and permanent characteristics of races, undergoes very great changes.”*

*“But the important fact to be kept in mind is that whatever the cause may be, and whether the change in type is for the better or worse, the influence of the new environment is very marked indeed, and we may therefore expect that the degree and ease of assimilation has probably been somewhat greater than has been heretofore assumed.”*‡

The rapidity of the race assimilation in the United States is proved by the absence of racial domination where given races are numerically in the ascendancy.

In America different nationalities are subjected to the same conditions. Each has a chance to make its characteristic dominant.

“The process of assimilation is going on in the United States and is going on very effectually and rapidly, or else there would be differences between different communities, which would be obvious to superficial observation. This assimilation takes place

“(a) By intermarriage. It is principally in second and third generations that amalgamation occurs, for two immigrants who come here are either already married or will naturally marry those with whom they associate.

“(b) By the common-school education.

“(c) By the exercise of political rights.

“Assimilating influences are principally social—that is, the influence

\* E. A. Ross, “Causes of Race Superiority,” in *Annals of American Academy*, July, 1910.

† *The Immigration Problem*, by Jenks and Lauck, 1912, pp. 266, 269.

‡ E. A. Ross, “Causes of Race Superiority,” in *Annals of American Academy*, July, 1910.

of institutions already established, of a dominant language, of the customs of original inhabitants.”\*

Professor Earl Finch presents “some facts tending to prove that race blending, especially in the rare instances when it occurs under favorable circumstances, produces a type superior in fertility, vitality, and cultural worth to one or both of the parent stocks.”

This view was maintained, on the whole, in the preliminary discussion of the last Congress of Races, the manifest exceptions to the statement being explicable mainly by the unsatisfactory social conditions of the half-breeds—in other words, *the problems of miscegenation are sociological rather than physiological.*

Professor Franz Boas, of Columbia University, in a recent volume, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, defends the proposition that there is a substantial equality in the native mental ability of all races of mankind; that the inferiority of races is not due to any lack of native ability, but to the accidents which have prevented them from sharing in the fruits of the discoveries made by individual geniuses. He finds that “the characteristics of the osseous, muscular, visceral, and circulatory system have practically no direct relation to the mental ability of men” (Manouvrier); and that the size of the brain is so nearly alike in all races that no inferences can be drawn from the facts collected. “It is not impossible that the smaller brains of males of other races should do the same work as is done by the larger brain of the white race” (p. 27). He contends that “the civilizations of ancient Peru and Central America may well be compared with the ancient civilizations of the Old World” (p. 7). *In view of his investigations, the author does not fear the effects of the intermingling of races in America.*†

Says Professor Ripley: “Going back far enough, it is clear that all the peoples of Europe are a hodge-podge of different stocks.” Going back as far as we please to the Aryans, we find, some scholars claim, a mixed race. “*Le terme d’Aryen est de pure convention.*”‡ In addition to this sort of general evidence, there is material of a more definite

\* Richard Mayo-Smith, in *American Statistical Association*, December, 1893, pp. 429-449.

† From the book review in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January, 1912.

‡ Quoted in *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Chamberlain, p. 64, note.



kind. Distinguished men have an ancestry of a mongrel sort.

"Alexandre Dumas (West-Indian negro blood); Alexander Hamilton (French and English); Du Maurier and St-Gaudens, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, stand for still greater strains of bonds of nationality. Lafcadio Hearn (Greek and Irish). These few examples show that intermixture is, at all events, not destructive in its effect."

Take, too, such a case as Robert Browning, who was rather proud of the fact that he was the product of four strains of European blood.

Drs. von Luschan and Haddon agree that there are practically no pure races still existing, and that a discussion of races is mainly of academic interest. The former goes so far as to state that the old Indo-European, the African, and the Asiatic all branched off from the same primitive stock, perhaps hundreds of years ago, but all three forming a complete unit, intermarrying in all directions without the slightest decrease of fertility.

Even American families have been much beholden to "foreign" blood. Wendell Phillips and Phillips Brooks would be regarded by most people as fine products of the Anglo-Saxon stock. Both had Du Maurier's "drop of Hebrew blood." Professor Sombart credits the Jews with furnishing one frontiersman to every four in the era of American beginnings.

The unfavorable mixture of South-American races with Indians and negroes cited by Prescott F. Hall is not a fair parallel with the mixture of European races. It leaves out of account the European and American *milieu*—education, marriage, the home, and high political institutions.

There seems some distinct limits put by nature upon the mixture of certain races, just as there is to the blending of blood which has become badly vitiated. Nature puts a final veto upon propagation in such directions. There would seem to be, then, a friendly hand held out by nature itself to prevent disastrous results in race admixture.

Another interesting side to this question, however, is seen particularly in the Orient, where the Chinese have mixed with many peoples, as, for instance, the Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Malays. These Mestizos are recognized in the Orient as particularly clever, the reason often assigned being that the Chinese protect and educate their children, no matter what the other blood may be, whereas the Eurasian (white

and Asiatic mixed) is crippled by the lack of support and education—that is, practical desertion by the white father.

But moral motives are effective in race assimilation and unification. The English lower classes received an enormous uplift, according to Macaulay, from the Reformation, which in his vivid phrase, as I recall it, “transformed the rabble of Wat Tyler into the invincible Ironsides of Cromwell.” Transforming and unifying enthusiasms may at any time appear among our new-comers.

The Roman Empire did not fall on account of racial degeneracy, due to the infiltration of Huns, Goths, and Vandals, but on account of the weakness of its political and industrial institutions, and the enervation of the people in the hands of the patrician class. The Roman land laws and Roman slaves, as well as the Roman system of government, which had no method of true amalgamation, but was a loose sort of confederacy, are responsible for the break-up of the Roman Empire.

The rapidity with which the democratic ideas are taken on by immigrants under the influence of our institutions is remarkable. I have personally had experiences with French-Canadians, Portuguese, Hebrews, and Italians. These races have certainly taken advantage of their opportunities among us in a fashion to promise well for their final effect upon this country. The French-Canadian has become a sufficiently good American to have given up his earlier programme of turning New England into a new France—that is, into a Catholic province or of returning to the Province of Quebec. He is seeing something better than a racial or religious ideal in the freedom of American citizenship; and on one or two occasions, when he had political power in two municipalities, he refrained from exercising it to the detriment of the public-school system. He has added a gracious manner and a new feeling for beauty to New England traits.

The Portuguese have taken up neglected or abandoned New England agricultural land and have turned it to productive and valuable use. Both the French-Canadian and the Portuguese have come to us by way of the New England textile mills.

The actual physical machinery of civilization—cotton-mills, woolen-mills, iron-mills, etc.—look up a great deal of human energy physical and mental, just as one hundred years ago the farms did, from which later sprang most of

the members of our dominant industrial class. A better organization of society, by which machinery would do still more and afford a freer play for mental and physical energy and organization, would find a response from classes that are now looked upon as not contributing to our American culture; would unlock the high potentialities in the laboring classes, now unguessed and unexpended.

The intellectual problems and the advanced thinking of the Hebrew, his fondness for study, and his freedom on the whole from wasteful forms of dissipation, sport, and mental stagnation, constitute him a more fortunate acquisition for this country than are thousands of the descendants of Colonial settlers. In short, we must reconstruct our idea of democracy—of American democracy. This done, we must construct a new picture of citizenship. If we do these things we shall welcome the rugged strength of the peasant or the subtle thought of the man of the Ghetto in our reconsidered American ideals. After all, what are these American ideals we boast so much about? Shall we say public schools, the ballot, freedom? The American stock use private schools when they can afford them; they too often leave town on Election Day; as for freedom, competent observers believe it is disappearing. The conservators and believers in American ideals seem to be our immigrants. To the Russian Jew, Abraham Lincoln is a god. If American ideals are such as pay honor to the intellectual and to the spiritual or foster human brotherhood or love culture and promote liberty, then they are safe with our new citizens who are eager for these things.

Not only do these races bring with them most desirable qualities, but they themselves are subjected to new environment and strongly influential conditions. Just here arise duties for the present masters of America. Ought they not to create an industrial, social, and educational environment of the most uplifting sort for our foreign-born citizens?

If working-people are obliged to live in unhealthy tenements situated in slums or marsh land, if the saloon is allowed to be their only social center, if they are fought by the rich in every effort to improve their condition, we may expect any misfortune to happen to them and also any fate to befall the State.

What improved *milieu* can do to improve the physique is easily seen on all sides. The increase in the height and

weight of Americans in the last few decades is conspicuous. Even the size of American girls and boys has increased, and this increase in size is commonly attributed to the more comfortable conditions of life, to better food, and especially to the popularity of all forms of athletics, and the extension, as in the last twenty-five or thirty years, of the out-of-door and country life. If these factors have made so marked and visible a change in the physique of the children of native-born Americans, why may not the same conditions also contribute an improvement to the more recent immigrant stock?

Our question, then, as to the effect of race mixture is not the rather supercilious one: What are we admitting into America that may possibly injure American ideals? but, What are the old American races doing to perpetuate these ideals? And is not our future as a race, largely by our own fault, in the hands of the peasant races of Europe?

After all, for those who pin their faith to the Baltic and northern European races, there is reason for hope to be found even in current immigration. From 1899 to 1910, the Hebrew, southern Italian, Polish, and Slovak period, of the nine millions who landed in the United States, while there were 377,527 Slovaks and 318,151 Magyars, there were 408,614 English, 586,306 Scandinavians, and 754,375 Germans, and even 136,842 Scotch, 151,774 Finnish, 439,724 Irish, and 20,752 Welsh. Two millions and a half from northern Europe—over twenty-six per cent. One million seventy-four thousand are Hebrews, mostly from Russia; and the Russian Jews, according to a most distinguished German Jew, are intellectually the ablest Hebrews in America. If, on the other hand, nearly two millions of the immigrants of the last decade have been southern Italians, let us show them gratitude for their invaluable manual labor, for their willingness, their patience, their power for fast work, and their love of America. Their small stature does not argue their degeneracy. The Romans were small compared to the Goths—small, but well formed and strong. The Japanese are also small.

Indifference, prejudice, illiteracy, segregation of recent immigrants by parochial schools, by a native colonial press, bad physical and social environment, and the low American ideals of citizenship held by those the immigrant sees or hears most about, obstruct race assimilation; but all these can be changed. Yes, it is the keeping up of difference and

class isolation that destroys and deteriorates. Fusion is a law of progress.

Lastly, let us observe that the men who hold a brief for the "foreigner" are largely men of science from the faculties of our American colleges. Ripley of Harvard, Giddings and Boas of Columbia, and Mayo-Smith (now dead), Jenks of Cornell, Patten and Kelsey of the University of Pennsylvania. The best thought and the best teaching of the country on race mixture is optimistic and constructive. Is it not also significant that an alienist like Dr. Dana is not dismayed by the immigrant, but is hopeful of his contribution? All these are scientific witnesses and are on the spot.

Every act of religious or civil tyranny, every economic wrong done to races in all the world, becomes the burden of the nation to which the oppressed flee for relief and opportunity. And the beauty of democracy is that it is a method by which these needs may freely express themselves and bring about what the oppressed have prayed for and have been denied. Let us be careful not to put America into the class of the oppressors. Let us rise to an eminence higher than that occupied by Washington or Lincoln, to a new Americanism which is not afraid of the blending in the western world of races seeking freedom. Our present problem is the greatest in our history. Not colonial independence, not Federal unity, but racial amalgamation is the heroic problem of the present, with all it implies in purification and revision of old social, religious, and political ideals, with all it demands in new sympathy outside of blood and race, and in a willingness to forego old-time privileges.

The familiar words of Israel Zangwill will bear repeating—that modern prophet from the race that gave to the world Jesus—when, from a steamer in New York Harbor, he broods over America:

"There she lies, the great Melting Pot. Listen! Can't you hear the roaring and the bubbling? There gapes her mouth—the harbor where a thousand mammoth feeders come from the ends of the world to pour in their human freight. Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian—black and yellow. Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross—how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah, what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to wor-

ship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races come to labor and look forward."

If America has done anything for an American, it ought to have made him helpful and hopeful toward mankind, especially the poor and oppressed; but science to-day comes to the assistance of democracy and finds the lyric cry of brotherhood in the laws of nature:

"Open thy gates, O thou favored of Heaven,  
Open thy gates to the homeless and poor.  
So shalt thou garner the gifts of the ages—  
From the Northlands their vigor,  
The Southlands their grace,  
In a mystical blending of souls that presages  
The birth of earth's rarest, undreamable race."

PERCY STICKNEY GRANT.